



# G a r d e n o f A v a l o n

K i n o k o N a s u





# Garden of Avalon

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# Chapter 00

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## 00. At the Garden

The plains were smooth and covered by blossoms of every colour. Standing amidst them and taking in the panorama, only some groves of trees in the distance would obstruct your view of the green earth and blue sky filling the scene in equal measure. For here stood no fences or homes made by human hands – no walls, redoubts or lines in the ground men called borders.

At morn's light, bright rays of spring and the flavours of summer filled the air.

By night's fall, the sky was swept by autumn winds and dotted by bright stars of winter.

On the earth dwelt many flowers and insects. The forests were home to water and greenery and different beasts. And upon the lake lived the graceful Fae.

Man's concept of Paradise was but an imitation of this isle at world's end, a land which they would forever be forbidden from setting foot upon. Legends referred to this microcosm as 'the island of apples'; a land of everlasting spring; a utopia that could never be obtained or reached by wiser beasts; a realm untouched by the cycle of descensions and downfalls seen in the greater world; and a strange land that had always existed alongside the length of human history and yet would never cross paths with humanity.

Its name was Avalon – and it was the sea at the heart of the planet, the seat for the soul of the celestial being called Earth.

"No... that is not the most correct expression to describe such a thing. For this realm is after all set upon both a higher and a lower plane of our world. I would say that it exists in the exact same point and location but off-set by several phases."

Someone walked the garden in the form of a human, that of a man dressed in

a robe simple in design but woven from the finest fabrics. The sun's rays shone through his long hair, igniting a rainbow of colours, as he stood there at ease and gazed into the distance.

He strode through the sea of flowers as he spoke to them as one would speak to a friend. No doubt or hesitation could be seen as he hummed and continued to walk, not damaging a single petal on the ground.

Undoubtedly he was some wayfaring sage who wandered into this foreign place. For one thing, none would journey upon the isle unless they also knew the way back, for it was known that Avalon was meant only for the dead.

He walked on without any hint of fear because he himself was a foreign being. It was true that no living man could set foot within this Paradise – but he simply donned the form of one and something else entirely.

To him, the outer world and this garden were much the same. They were the homes of others, where he was merely a guest. He belonged in neither of them and yet he could only find himself in one or the other. From the start, his philosophy on the matter was to neither approach nor make friendly with humans nor paradises. That would explain the 'how' as to his sudden visit to this untouched land beyond the boundary; as for the 'why', that would be his being pursued by a woman he had scorned and happening upon the bright idea to escape to the literal end of the world.

"But this is really quite a terrible place... the magic in the air is so thick, it might as well be a vacuum. Just single breath would sunder any living man of this era. The Paradise of legend, indeed... perhaps can it be better employed as a weapon?"

He put to words whatever came to mind as he walked through the garden.

The world and people he had left behind was a 5th Century island nation. He had been the court Magus of a king – but rather than stand alongside him in his final battle, he transferred himself into this realm just prior and escaped by himself for exceedingly personal reasons concerning a certain female.

"I see. It was as I had expected... Mordred rose up in revolt with the approval of the lords who had been rebuked by the King., even pressing blame for the severe winters of recent years. So begins the rebellion against our stern king,

that living embodiment of the ideals of kingship.”

He trudged along, the flowers which he paid special attention not to step on lessening as he did. Although the isle stretched on endlessly, the environment itself did change; the closer he drew to where the shores of the island ought to be, the more barren and infertile the land became, much like Britain in the outer world.

He pressed on, humming and twirling his staff – and curiously, flowers would spring up in the imprints he made upon the ground, despite there being no traces of Thaumaturgies or esotericae. They did not blossom from his desires to decorate the garden or a sense of sympathy towards these apparently barren lands, a disgrace compared to the rest of this Paradise.

No – for this creature, bringing forth such profusions was as natural as taking breath.

Bringing flowers to the earth; placing dreams in the hearts of men; ushering in simply a future for our history...

Those were his specialties, aspects of his true nature. His name was Merlin, the Magus of Flowers; one of the greatest of Magi even amidst the myriad spell-weavers of human myths and legend; a cambion, the offspring of a human woman and an incubus; and possessor of those eyes which signified supreme mastery of Thaumaturgy – eyes which could perceive into the world.

“Well, so they claim... but in truth those eyes can do little more than sow more seeds. We cannot compare them to those of common men simply because we see further than them.”

Clairvoyance – the ability of the eyes to remain in one place while seeing through to another. Since ancient times, greater beings had left the earth in the care of shamans who utilised this power to safeguard the lives of men. Even the greatest of Magi – holding the thickest of Magic Circuits and capable of conducting the most powerful of rituals – would not be considered an epitome of Thaumaturgy without this ‘sight.’

Merlin possessed such eyes with which to see through the world. He was born with a sense of sight that allowed him to perceive any and all things in existence within his era, down to the smallest of details, without needing to take a single

step.

Some Magi older than him even possessed eyes which could perceive into the past, or the future. Of course, they were also considered at the zenith – but the only living Magus who possessed clairvoyance was Merlin. The previous holders had brought annihilation to their own realm and disappeared from the world of men.

To 'know' is simultaneously the lowest and the greatest accomplishment of Thaumaturgy; thus, those Magi born in possession of clairvoyance had at the same time reached the truth of the world – becoming heretics of humanity itself who never managed to gain their philosophies and perspectives.

Without retrocognition, Merlin did not possess the ability to comprehend how other human beings lived their lives – only some aspects of it. He could not understand how human society operated, but he did manage to take away the impression that, generally speaking, their lives were not very interesting. Merlin was aware of nearly all the doings and happenings occurring within his era, as well as capable of deducing how they would end; to him, the world was no different from a tapestry.

Certainly, it was a piece worth appreciating at length. He might even consider it an expression of the concept of divine miracles. However, the more interesting the piece became, the more apparent it became that Merlin had no place in it. He simply sowed the seeds and was alienated from the results; his life might have gone differently if he had just a single companion who were able to sympathise with his grumblings – of how boring the perspective of God would be.

It was to the point that he had even thought about taking his own life and ascend to the Throne immediately as a spirit, even as those who came before laughed at him – or rather, there had rarely been a day where he did not consider it.

However, there was one responsibility that Merlin must see through to the end.

He must see for himself the end of a certain people – and their king which he himself had wrought.



“Oh, I do wonder... the age of Gods is long past, and with what is soon to unfold, so too will the age of the Fae end. It is age of Man – and that will also reach its eventual conclusion. The day will come when this star of ours ceases to rotate, after which we will establish ourselves in the heavens, beginning the age of the Will. Those incapable of volition without a frame of flesh and blood will be left behind in time. And yet... I wonder why I find myself so often mingled with humanity.”

Merlin was born from the union of a Welsh princess and an incubus. As a cambion, you could consider him a higher form of life, equipped with both a spiritual nature and the ability to subsist on humans, beings which were capable of conceiving futures – if he were not in fact a halfway creation standing on neither side. Merlin himself had pondered life as an incubus’s child, existing only to bring antics to the world of human minds. At the same time, he developed the individuality that was humanity, and believed it a blessing to be able to function not simply within the dreams of others, but his own as well.

Despite the circumstances of his birth, Merlin never came to despise humanity. If anything, he grew fond of them to an unnatural degree. Rather than the Fae and the Giants – his brethren – Merlin found himself allied with man, fostering and advising many a king, all to create a better era for them to exist. While standing amidst the people and the knights, he never let the smile slip off his face, and he found enjoyment in human activity. He aimed to administer as he would nurture a flower – something that would lead to him going down in history as one of the greatest kingmakers to ever live. All of this came about from Merlin’s desire to complete this tapestry in a way that he would find beautiful – as a ‘happy ending’ for humanity.

In fact, it left no room for love towards any single human being, or humanity at all.

To man, Merlin might appear a sterling figure; however, from a general human perspective, the nature of Merlin was in truth closer to a sort of locust. He was entirely too mechanical, too objective; his thoughts advanced by leaps and bounds, irreconcilably beyond the comprehension of the intelligent beings born of this planet. He was attracted to the exquisite and the beautiful, but he did not love them; exquisite, beautiful things simply, comfortably, snugly filled the hole

in his heart. He loved the concept of ‘humanity’s legacy’ but he was utterly incapable of transferring that emotion to the actual human beings taking part in creating it.

He might find a work of art lovely – but he would never be interested by its content, or see any worth in the emotional highs and lows experienced by the one who created it. He would only see the beauty of the piece, without understanding the meaning.

Merlin himself knew that this peculiar appetite was an appalling thing, but he could hardly change it; after all, he was born with the morals of a different kind of creature. Incubi did not evaluate the contents of the dreams they devoured, only the degree to which it sustained their existence. It was no different from humans gathering at the table and partaking in their meals, with little thought for what the animals they devoured might have accomplished beforehand.

“I survive by eating dreams, and while I love to see reveries of hope and joy, nightmares are both easier to find and much more filling. It is far more difficult to subsist on the former – not to mention certainly raising the hurdle for the dreamer as well... and, here we are.”

Merlin stopped, figuring that he had removed himself far enough away from the vicious claws of the witch. Before him stood a gate assembled from roughly hewn stone of such massive size as to bring to mind the Stonehenge, and between them laid the same barren plain as before. A single phrase was carved into the gate: *“only the sinless may pass.”*

“It appears I have been deceived.”

Merlin shrugged and made no attempts to avoid the gate, simply walking under it and sowing his flowers as he always did.

As soon as he did, the gentle slope he stood on changed completely. Thick walls of stone sprang from the earth as though to entrap the guest, stretching skyward without limit and sealing in the Magus. Merlin stood in the centre of this infinitely tall stone tower and turned around to find that the gate had disappeared. He was surrounded by stone walls on all sides – caged in a five square metre space carved from Paradise itself. That was the essence of this boundary field; some enemy of Merlin’s had ensured that the Magus would

spend the rest of his life in this tower.

“Truly I do not understand humans. A curse of this scale must have required an enormous cost – possibly taking even the life of the caster. Strange, I have no memory of offending that girl to such a degree... and if I cannot recall it, surely it must not have been anything important.”

*“Only the sinless may pass.”*

Merlin stepped through the gate, understanding that it was a trap, because he could not suffer those words. After all, it was true that he wished for humanity’s ultimate happiness despite not having any love for human beings. For the sake of bringing happiness and prosperity to humanity, he expended many human lives and treated them as little more than insects. There existed no good or evil in his actions, no love or hate – not even the awareness of sin. In fact, Merlin would likely consider himself the only one in the world deserving of the word ‘sinless’ and believe that the gate’s words actually referred to him specifically.

From a larger point of view, one could argue that Merlin had affections for humanity itself. However, he willingly entangled himself in the world of man and found joy in his actions. He merely lent his hand to humanity and fashioned them kings, but he felt neither responsibility nor guilt for what would befall the countries after – at least, not until he heard the parting words of a single girl.

“Well... I suppose this cannot be helped.”

Merlin sat himself upon a small protrusion jutting from the ground that was the only feature of this isolated gaol. It was far too stiff to be considered a proper seat, but putting himself on it granted the perfect height by which to gaze through the solitary window in the wall.

Only now did he fully realize the purpose of his visit here. What could be seen through the window was not the Britain of reality; however, to Merlin, any view was the same as he would be able to perceive all the events of the entire era through it. The Magus of Flowers went through the drafts and sketches he had made in life thus far and drew from the depths of his robe a hidden familiar – a Cath Palug.

Merlin began to talk.

The end was in sight – so before that, let us talk a little of the past.

Written by [CanonRap](#) Posted in [Fate](#)